3.1 LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the current land use in the SCAG region, identifies the potential impacts of the RTP on land use, includes mitigation measures for the impacts, and evaluates the residual impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The SCAG region is comprised of six counties: Imperial, Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura, and totals approximately 38,000 square miles in area. The region stretches from the state borders with Nevada and Arizona to the Pacific Ocean and from the southernmost edge of the Central Valley to the Mexican border. The region includes the county with the largest area in the nation, San Bernardino County, as well as the county with the highest population in the nation, Los Angeles County. This vast area includes millions of acres of open space and recreational land and a population of 17 million people. Figures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2 depict the year 2000 land uses and the location of open space in the SCAG region.

Urban development in the SCAG region is in the form of clusters, linked by freeways and commercial corridors interspersed with identifiable activity centers. Most existing urban development is found along the coastal plains of Los Angeles, Orange, and Ventura counties, as well as in adjoining valleys that extend inland from the coastal areas. Urban development also has moved into the inland valleys such as the Antelope, San Bernardino, Yucca, Moreno, Hemet–San Jacinto, Coachella, and Imperial Valleys. A map depicting city and county boundaries is provided as Figure 3.1-3.

Downtown Los Angeles is the largest urbanized center within the SCAG region. Other urbanized areas in Los Angeles County include Long Beach, Burbank, Glendale, Pasadena and Pomona. Office-core centers have emerged in Woodland Hills, Universal City, Westwood, around Los Angeles International Airport, and Century City. In the other five counties within the SCAG region, urban centers exist in the cities of Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Ana, Anaheim, Irvine, Oxnard and Ventura. Development centers in desert areas include the Lancaster-Palmdale corridor in the Antelope Valley (Los Angeles County); the Hesperia-Victorville corridor in Yucca Valley (San Bernardino County); and the Palm Springs - Palm Desert - Indio corridor in the Coachella Valley (Riverside County). El Centro is the county seat and focal point of activity in Imperial County. There is also substantial activity occurring in Imperial County at the three ports of entry along the border with Mexico.

Much of the development in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties has been on unincorporated county land. Areas that were rural twenty years ago are quickly becoming suburban. Riverside County has undertaken the Riverside County Integrated Project “to create a high quality, balanced, and sustainable environment for the citizens of Riverside County and to make

Riverside County's communities great places to live, work, and play."[1] The County of Ventura and cities within the county have enacted SOAR (Save Open-Space and Agricultural Resources) initiatives that, in effect, draw urban growth boundaries as a way to channel future development.[2] These plans and initiatives will affect how land is used in the future.

Within the older central cities, communities are being revitalized as buildings are converted into artist lofts and apartments. As the population ages, as land becomes scarce, and as the ethnic make up of the region continues to change, developers have been turning to different types of housing and commercial developments, including townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and mixed-use developments that combine commercial and office uses. Residential units are appearing in traditionally commercial areas in Los Angeles, Long Beach, Santa Ana, and Pasadena. Senior housing located near amenities is gaining popularity. These adaptive reuse projects are not restricted to the largest cities, as projects in the Cities of Whittier and Ontario illustrate.[3] At the same time buildings are being recycled into new uses, there are also movements across the region to preserve historic structures and places. Increasingly, communities across the region are recognizing the value of different styles of architecture and the different features that make a place unique.

The following sections describe in detail six overarching land uses across the region: residential, commercial/office, industrial, institutional, agricultural, and open space land uses.

Residential

The residential pattern of the SCAG region is largely shaped by topography. Most residents live in southern parts of Ventura, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino Counties with the urban form limited by national forests and mountains. In Orange County, residents live near the coast and west of the Cleveland National Forest. Residents also have moved inland to the high desert in northern Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties and the low desert in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys.

The majority of medium and high density housing in the region is found in the urban core of the region, in downtown Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, and the "West Side" of Los Angeles. Large cities such as Long Beach, Santa Ana, Glendale, Oxnard, and Pasadena also have concentrations of high-density development in their downtown areas. Several beach communities, such as the Cities of Santa Monica, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, Huntington Beach, and Newport Beach, have high density close to the ocean.

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1 Riverside County Integrated Project. (n.d.). *Why RCIP?* Retrieved April 14, 2003, from http://www.rcip.org/whyrcip.htm.

2 County of Ventura, Resource Management Agency, Planning Division. (n.d.). *SOAR questions and answers*. Retrieved April 14, 2003, from http://www.ventura.org/planning/pdf/02.pdf.

3 Southern California Association of Governments. 2002, June. *Redirecting sprawl within the walls: Adaptive reuse of buildings as one strategy to promote housing development*. Los Angeles, CA: Author.

Surrounding suburbs are predominantly low density housing tracts. Low density expands west into Ventura County, east through southeast Los Angeles County, throughout much of Orange County, and through the western Inland Empire. The resort communities and cities of the Coachella Valley in Riverside County also are built primarily on a low-density scale.

The developing land on the urban fringe, such as the Antelope Valley of Los Angeles County and the Victorville-Hesperia area, Lucerne Valley, and Yucca Valley of San Bernardino County, also are primarily low density.

The Imperial Valley in Imperial County is primarily an agricultural region with a growing, yet still regionally small, population that lives in primarily low-density developments.

Figure 3.1-4 displays the household density across the region. This map illustrates that the urban core is the densest part of the region and that suburban household densities also are prevalent through the region.

Commercial/Office

Across the region commercial development typically follows transportation corridors. Office development generally locates at the terminals of major transportation features, particularly airports and train stations, or at the intersection of major freeways. Downtown Los Angeles is the historical center of jobs in the region. Los Angeles International Airport and John Wayne Airport have considerable office clusters around them. Office buildings tend to cluster around major intersections, including areas such as the "El Toro Y" (intersection of I-5 and I-405) and the "Orange Crush" (intersection of Interstate 5 (I-5), State Route 22 (SR-22), and State Route 57 (SR-57)) in Orange County. Office developments also cluster around two of the major universities in the region, the Westwood area around the University of California-Los Angeles and the Irvine Spectrum near the University of California-Irvine.

Venture capital investment in high technology companies is clustered in five areas in the region: West Los Angeles, Irvine/South Orange County, the Conejo Corridor along Route 101 between Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, the South Bay of Los Angeles County, and the Pasadena area.[4]

Figure 3.1-5 depicts the employment density across the region. This map illustrates jobs located at major transportation intersections and along transportation corridors.

Industrial

The focal points of industrial activity in the region are the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. Put together, these adjacent ports represent the third busiest shipping port in the world. The industrial activity spreads north from the ports along the Alameda Corridor to downtown Los

[4] Southern California Association of Governments. (2002, June). *Venture capital investment in the SCAG region – Year 2001 review.* Los Angeles, CA: Author.

Angeles and extends east through the City of Industry and the City of Commerce toward San Bernardino County.

Many manufacturing industries, distribution centers, and warehouses have established businesses in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. This activity has made the Inland Empire a distribution center for the region, state, and nation. Adding to the goods coming by highway and rail through San Bernardino County are goods coming to the county by air through several airports that cater to air cargo, primarily Ontario International Airport. Industrial uses tend to cluster around cargo-handling airports to take advantage of transportation options.

Significant air cargo and associated industrial land uses also are located around Los Angeles International Airport. A third port in the region, Port Hueneme in Ventura County, also has industrial activity around it. Along the Mexican border, the three ports of entry in Imperial County see large amounts of commerce going back and forth between the two countries.

Extraction activities in the region focus on oil and minerals. Ventura County has extensive extraction activities in the far southwestern part of the county and along Route 126. These activities extend into Los Angeles County to the area around the City of Santa Clarita. Across southern Los Angeles County, oil wells and oil refineries remain. Oil drilling and refining also takes place in Orange County near Huntington Beach and Newport Beach. Significant mining operations take place in the eastern portion of Imperial County. Wind energy generation facilities are located in the San Gorgonio Pass between Banning and Palm Springs. Industrial land uses can be identified on Figure 3.1-1.

Institutional

Institutional land uses, which include large government and private operations, such as military bases, airports, and universities, encompass a considerable footprint in the region. Military operations consume a substantial quantity of land. The ten active duty military facilities in the SCAG region are listed below.[5]

- Barstow Marine Corps Logistics Base
- Edwards Air Force Base
- El Centro Naval Air Facility
- Fort Irwin
- Los Angeles Air Force Base
- March Air Reserve Base

[5] California military bases: Bases by county. (n.d.). Retrieved September 4, 2003, from U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer Web site: http://www.senate.gov/member/ca/boxer/general/CAbases/county.html.

- Naval Warfare Assessment Station, Corona
- Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach
- Point Mugu Naval Air Weapons Station
- Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Combat Center

In addition, land controlled by Edwards Air Force Base, based in Kern County, extends into Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. The Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range in Imperial and Riverside Counties is also an institutional use that is off limits to the public.

A substantial quantity of land is dedicated to airports in Los Angeles County. In the Antelope Valley, a large portion of land is dedicated to airport uses at Palmdale Airport. LAX is another major institutional land use. Bob Hope Airport and Long Beach Airport are the other commercial airports in Los Angeles County. Airports in other parts of the region include Ontario International Airport, Southern California Logistics Airport, and San Bernardino International Airport in San Bernardino County, Palm Springs International Airport and March Inland Port in Riverside County, John Wayne Airport in Orange County, and numerous general aviation airports scattered across the SCAG region.

University and college campuses are located in every county of the SCAG region. The largest are universities in the University of California system (Irvine, Los Angeles, and Riverside) and the California State University system (Channel Islands, Dominguez Hills, Fullerton, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Northridge, San Bernardino, and San Diego-Imperial Valley Campus). California Polytechnic University at Pomona and the University of Southern California are the other large universities in the region. There are numerous smaller universities and colleges in the region, both public and private, as well as an extensive community college system that spans the region.

Agricultural

There are substantial areas of agriculture in the region. Table 3.1-1 indicates the rank and top three products of the SCAG counties in 2001, and Figure 3.1-6 shows the location of prime agriculture and grazing lands. All six counties in the SCAG region are in the top half of California counties in agricultural products.[6] Agriculture remains an important part of the regional economy and is the focus of Imperial County's economy.

Open Space

Much of the SCAG region is protected as open space. The federal Bureau of Land Management owns the vast majority of land in the eastern portion of the region. There are national parks and forests as well as state, regional, and local parks throughout the region. Figure 3.1-2 shows the open space and recreation lands in the SCAG region.

6 California Agricultural Statistics Service. (n.d.) *Agricultural overview 2001*. Retrieved July 21, 2003, from ftp://www.nass.usda.gov/pub/nass/ca/AgStats/2001-ovw.pdf.

Table 3.1-1: Statewide County Rank, Total Value of Agricultural Production, and Leading Commodities, 2001			
Rank	**County**	**Total Value (In Thousands $)**	**Leading Commodities**
9	Riverside	$1,124,908	Milk, Nursery Products, Table Grapes
10	Ventura	$1,053,636	Strawberries, Lemons, Celery
11	Imperial	$1,010,321	Cattle, Alfalfa, Head and Leaf Lettuce
14	San Bernardino	$703,465	Milk, Cattle and Calves, Replacement Heifers
20	Orange	$319,053	Nursery Stock and Cut Flowers, Strawberries, Tomatoes
27	Los Angeles	$258,260	Nursery Plants, Root Vegetables, Peaches

Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service. (n.d.). *Agricultural overview 2001*. Retrieved July 21, 2003, from ftp://www.nass.usda.gov/pub/nass/ca/AgStats/2001-ovw.pdf

The Los Padres National Forest occupies the northern half of Ventura County. The Angeles National Forest bisects Los Angeles County. Orange County has the Cleveland National Forest along its eastern spine. The state parks along the Pacific Ocean and the public beaches along its shore are important areas of open space for the region.

The San Bernardino National Forest, Joshua Tree National Park, Death Valley National Park, the Mojave Preserve, and large swaths of land owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) protect the majority San Bernardino County as open space.

The Salton Sea is the region's largest inland water body, straddling the Riverside County-Imperial County line. Part of Anza Borrego Desert State Park, the largest California State Park, is located in Imperial County.

Vacant land that is not designated as open space is scattered throughout the region but exists primarily in the inland portions of the region. With the expanding population, vacant land that is suitable for development is rapidly being consumed.

REGULATORY SETTING

The regulatory setting describes the federal, state, and local agencies that have jurisdiction over land use. The regulations pertinent to land use that each of these agencies enforce are also described.

Federal Agencies and Regulations

All Federal Agencies

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implements NEPA. NEPA provides information on expected environmental effects of federally funded projects. Impacts on land uses and conflicts with state, regional, or local plans and policies are among the considerations included in the regulations. The regulations also require that projects requiring NEPA review seek to avoid or minimize adverse effects of proposed actions and restore and enhance environmental quality as much as possible.

United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The BLM manages approximately 10 million acres of the total SCAG region, primarily in the eastern portion of the region. The California Desert Conservation Area Plan is used to manage BLM controlled areas. The BLM also implements biological resource management policies through its designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

United States Forest Service (USFS)

The USFS manages approximately 2.3 million acres of national forests in the SCAG region. The four national forests in the region are the Angeles National Forest, San Bernardino National Forest, Los Padres National Forest, and the Cleveland National Forest.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The USFWS administers the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and designates critical habitat for endangered species. The USFWS also manages the National Wildlife Refuges in the SCAG region. These include the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge (in Imperial County) and Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge (in Ventura County).

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Among its responsibilities, the USACE administers Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), which governs specified activities in waters of the United States, including wetlands. In this role, the USACE requires that a permit be obtained if a project would place structures, including dredged or filled materials, within navigable waters or wetlands, or result in alteration of such areas.

National Park Service (NPS)

The NPS manages national parks and wilderness areas. Two national parks and one wilderness area are located in the SCAG region: Joshua Tree National Park, a portion of Death Valley National Park, and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The NRCS maps soils and farmland uses to provide comprehensive information necessary for understanding, managing, conserving and sustaining the nation's limited soil resources. The NRCS manages the Farmland Protection Program, which provides funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses.

State Agencies and Regulations

California Department of Conservation

In 1982, the State of California created the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program within the California Department of Conservation to carry on the mapping activity from the NRCS on a continuing basis. The California Department of Conservation administers the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, for the conservation of farmland and other resource-oriented laws.

California Coastal Commission

The California Coastal Commission plans for and regulates development in the coastal zone consistent with the policies of the California Coastal Act. The Commission also administers the federal Coastal Zone Management Act in California.[7] As part of the Coastal Act, cities and counties are required to prepare a local coastal program (LCP) for the portion of its jurisdiction within the coastal zone. With an approved LCP, cities and counties control coastal development that accords with the local coastal plan. If no local coastal plan has been approved, the Coastal Commission controls coastal development.[8]

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

The Caltrans jurisdiction includes right-of-ways of state and interstate routes within California. Any work within the right-of-way of a federal or state transportation corridor is subject to Caltrans regulations governing allowable actions and modifications to the right-of-way.

Caltrans includes the Division of Aeronautics, which is responsible for airport permitting and establishing a county Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for each county with one or more public airports. ALUCs are responsible for the preparation of land use plans for areas near aviation facilities.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)

The CDF reviews and approves plans for timber harvesting on private lands. In addition, through its responsibility for fighting wildland fires, the CDF plays a role in planning development in forested areas.

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7 The other federally designated agency is the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) which operates outside of the SCAG region.

8 Fulton, W. 1999. *Guide to California planning*. Point Arena, CA: Solano Press Books.

California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR)

The CDPR manages and provides sites for a variety of recreational and outdoor activities. The CDPR is a trustee agency that owns and operates all state parks and participates in land use planning that affects state parkland.

California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)

The land use mandate of the CDFG is to protect rare, threatened, and endangered species by managing habitat in legally designated ecological reserves or wildlife areas. CDFG reserves located in the SCAG region include the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve (Orange County) and Imperial State Wildlife Area (Imperial County).

Public Agencies

Public agencies are entrusted with compliance with CEQA and its provisions are enforced, as necessary, through litigation and the threat thereof. CEQA defines a significant effect on the environment as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the physical conditions within the area affected by the project. Land use is a required impact assessment category under CEQA.

Local Agencies and Regulations

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

As related to land use, SCAG is authorized to undertake the intergovernmental review for federal assistance and direct federal development pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 12,372. Pursuant to CEQA (Public Resource Code Sections 21083 and 21087 and CEQA Guidelines Sections (15206 and 15125(b)), SCAG reviews projects of regional significance for consistency with regional plans. SCAG is also responsible for preparation of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), pursuant to California Government Code Section 65584(a). SCAG's RHNA provides a tool for coordinating local housing development strategies.

SCAG's *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG)*[9] is intended to provide a framework for decision making by local governments regarding growth and development. The Plan proposes strategies for local governments to use on a voluntary basis to reconcile local needs with state and federal planning requirements.

Local Agency Formation Commissions

The local agency formation commission (LAFCO) is the agency in each county that has the responsibility to create orderly local government boundaries, with the goal of encouraging

9 Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). March 1999. Regional comprehensive plan and development guide. Los Angeles, CA: SCAG.

"planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns," the preservation of open-space lands, and the discouragement of urban sprawl.[10] While LAFCOs have no direct land use authority, their actions determine which local government will be responsible for planning new areas. LAFCOs address a wide range of boundary actions, including creation of spheres of influence for cities, adjustments to boundaries of special districts, annexations, incorporations, detachments of areas from cities, and dissolution of cities.

General Plans

The most comprehensive land use planning for the SCAG region is provided by city and county general plans, which local governments are required by state law to prepare as a guide for future development. The general plan contains goals and policies concerning topics that are mandated by state law or which the jurisdiction has chosen to include. Required topics are land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Other topics that local governments frequently choose to address are public facilities, parks and recreation, community design, and growth management, among others. City and county general plans must be consistent with each other. County general plans must cover areas not included by city general plans (i.e., unincorporated areas).

Specific and Master Plans

A city or county may also provide land use planning by developing community or specific plans for smaller, more specific areas within their jurisdiction. These more localized plans provide for focused guidance for developing a specific area, with development standards tailored to the area, as well as systematic implementation of the general plan.

Zoning

The city or county zoning code is the set of detailed requirements that implement the general plan policies at the level of the individual parcel. The zoning code presents standards for different uses and identifies which uses are allowed in the various zoning districts of the jurisdiction. Since 1971, state law has required the city or county zoning code to be consistent with the jurisdiction's general plan.

Growth Control

Local growth control endeavors to manage community growth by various methods, including tying development to infrastructure capacity, limiting the number of new housing units, setting limits on the increase of commercial square footage, and the adoption of urban growth boundaries, among others.

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10 Governor's Office of Planning and Research. 1997. *LAFCOs, general plans, and city annexations*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

METHODOLOGY

This section summarizes the methodology used to evaluate the expected impacts of implementation of the proposed Plan on existing land uses and existing land use plans and policies.

Comparison with the No Project

The analysis of land use includes a comparison of the expected future conditions with the proposed Plan to the expected future conditions if no Plan were adopted. This evaluation is not included in the determination of the significance of impacts; however, it provides a meaningful perspective on the effects of the Plan.

Determination of Significance

This analysis evaluates land uses most likely to be affected by the construction and operation of the highway, freight rail, and transit projects in the proposed Plan and implementation of transportation and urban form policies and programs included in the Plan. GIS was used to overlay proposed Plan highway, freight rail, and transit alignments and the associated growth projection onto 2000 aerial photography of the existing land uses for the SCAG region. In addition to this GIS analysis, land use effects of arterial investments and undefined alignments were also considered. The significance criteria below were applied to determine if resulting changes in land use would be significant. The methodology for determining the significance of these impacts compares the future Plan conditions to the existing setting, as required in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(a). In addition, general plan maps submitted by SCAG member cities and counties were analyzed to evaluate potential conflicts with General Plan land uses.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

A significant impact is defined as “a substantial or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment” (Public Resource Code § 21068). The proposed Plan would have a significant impact if implementation would:

- Result in a substantial loss or disturbance of existing prime farmland, grazing land, open space, or recreation land; or

- Result in inconsistency with applicable adopted land use plans and policies.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Implementation of the 2004 RTP would affect land use. Expected significant impacts include a loss of prime farmlands, grazing lands, open space and recreation lands, inconsistencies with general plans, and cumulatively considerable changes to land use and the intensity of land use.

Short-term construction related impacts and long-term or permanent displacement or offsite impacts from new facilities would potentially occur as a result of implementation of the 2004 RTP. Below are descriptions of the types of direct impacts foreseeable from new transportation projects

proposed in the 2004 RTP. Indirect impacts due to the changes in population distribution expected to occur due to the 2004 RTP's transportation investments and transportation and land use policies also are discussed under cumulative impacts.

All mitigation measures shall be included in project-level analysis as appropriate. The lead agency for each individual project in the Plan shall be responsible for ensuring adherence to the mitigation measures prior to construction. SCAG shall be provided with documentation of compliance with mitigation measures through SCAG's monitoring efforts, including SCAG's Intergovernmental Review Process.

Impact 3.1-1: Implementation of the proposed 2004 RTP transportation projects would result in substantial disturbance and/or loss of prime farmlands or grazing lands throughout the six-county SCAG region.

As shown in Figure 3.1-1: General Land Use Patterns and Figure 3.1-6 Prime Agricultural Farm Land and Grazing Land the six-county SCAG region contains areas used for agricultural purposes. These areas are interspersed throughout urban areas and located in less developed portions of the counties. Development of highway, arterial, and transit projects proposed under the 2004 RTP would result in the disturbance and/or loss of a substantial portion of these designated agricultural areas. SCAG's GIS was used to analyze where major freeway, rail, and transit projects identified in the 2004 RTP intersect areas used for agriculture. A 300-foot buffer (150 feet on either side) was drawn around the freeway, rail, and transit projects in the 2004 RTP to compute the number of agricultural acres potentially affected by the projects in the 2004 RTP. The results of this analysis using the data from Figure 3.1-6 Prime Agricultural Farmland and Grazing Land show that construction and operation of freeway, rail, and transit projects in the 2004 RTP would potentially affect up to 6,500 acres of prime farmland and up to 7,700 acres of grazing lands.

In addition, the 2004 RTP includes arterial investments, goods movement capacity enhancements, and the Maglev system, which were not included in the GIS analysis summarized above. The alignments of these improvements have not been developed to the point that they can be reliably overlaid onto agricultural lands using GIS. However, these projects would potentially cause additional adverse effects on agricultural lands.

In total, the 2004 RTP includes approximately 3,300 new arterial lane miles, some of which would potentially disturb or consume agricultural lands in the region.

One strategy being explored in the 2004 RTP is the concept of dedicated facilities to accommodate truck traffic. This system would comprise upwards of 140 center-line miles of dedicated facilities along alignments extending from the San Pedro Bay ports, through the East-West Corridor, and out to strategic distribution points northeast or southwest of the urbanized areas. These facilities would traverse through grazing lands and, depending on the alignment, potentially would traverse through prime agricultural lands. The final alignment likely would be adjacent to or concurrent with existing alignments, and thus, the adverse effects on agricultural lands would be minimized.

The proposed Maglev system would be located in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The initial operating segment would be between West Los Angeles and Ontario International Airport. Future segments would extend the Maglev system to Los Angeles International Airport, Palmdale Airport, March Inland Port, and Irvine by way of Long Beach and John Wayne Airport. Another line would connect Anaheim with Los Angeles Union Station. [11] In total, the proposed Maglev route in 2030 would be approximately 275 miles, which potentially would traverse through prime agricultural lands and grazing lands. The final alignment is expected to follow existing transportation right-of-way, thus minimizing adverse effects on agricultural lands. Furthermore, the Maglev system runs on an elevated track that potentially would consume or disturb less land. The Maglev system would have approximately fourteen stations and would also require land for maintenance and power generation. The location of the stations and other facilities associated with operating the Maglev system potentially would consume or disturb agricultural land.

Additional agricultural lands would be affected by the growth associated with the 2004 RTP. The effect of growth and urban development on agricultural lands is addressed in the Cumulative Impacts section of this chapter.

The loss and disturbance of agricultural lands would be a significant impact of the 2004 RTP.

Mitigation Measures

MM 3.1-1a: Individual projects must be consistent with Federal, State, and local policies that preserve agricultural lands and support the economic viability of agricultural activities, as well as policies that provide compensation for property owners if preservation is not feasible.

MM 3.1-1b: For projects impacting agricultural land, project implementation agencies shall contact the California Department of Conservation and each county's Agricultural Commissioner's office to identify the location of prime farmlands and lands that support crops considered valuable to the local or regional economy. Impacts to such lands shall be evaluated in project-specific environmental documents. The analysis shall use the land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) analysis method (CEQA Guidelines §21095), as appropriate. Mitigation measures may include conservation easements or the payment of in-lieu fees.

MM 3.1-1c: Project implementation agencies shall consider corridor realignment, buffer zones and setbacks, and berms and fencing where feasible, to avoid agricultural lands and to reduce conflicts between transportation uses and agricultural lands.

MM 3.1-1d: Prior to final approval of each project and when feasible and prudent, the implementing agency shall establish conservation easement programs to mitigate impacts to prime farmland.

[11] SCAG has completed several studies on different segments of the Maglev system. They are available at the SCAG website: http://www.scag.ca.gov/maglev/

MM 3.1-1e: Prior to final approval of each project, the implementing agency shall to the extent practical and feasible, avoid impacts to prime farmlands or farmlands that support crops considered valuable to the local or regional economy.

MM 3.1-1f: Prior to final approval of each project, the implementing agency shall encourage enrollments of agricultural lands for counties that have Williamson Act programs, where applicable.

Significance after Mitigation

This impact would remain **significant** because it is anticipated that substantial loss and disturbance of agricultural land would occur.

Impact 3.1-2: Implementation of the projects included in the 2004 RTP would result in a substantial loss or disturbance of existing open space and recreation lands.

As shown in Figure 3.1-2: Open Space and Recreation Lands in the SCAG Region, the six-county SCAG region contains areas of open space and recreation lands interspersed throughout the region. These pockets of open space vary in size and location. Open space and recreation lands include public parks, recreational facilities, and areas planned for such uses.

SCAG's GIS was used to analyze where major freeway, rail, and transit projects in the 2004 RTP intersect areas designated for open space and recreation lands. A 300-foot buffer (150 feet on either side) was drawn around the freeway, rail, and transit projects in the 2004 RTP to compute the number of open space and recreation lands potentially affected by the projects in the 2004 RTP. The results of this analysis (Figure 3.1-1 Existing Land Use Patterns) show that the 2004 RTP would potentially affect approximately 1,400 acres of open space and recreation lands.

In addition, the 2004 RTP includes arterial investments, goods movement capacity enhancements, and the Maglev system, which were not included in the GIS analysis summarized above. The alignments of these improvements have not been developed to the point that they can be reliably overlaid onto open space and recreation lands using GIS. However, these projects would potentially cause additional adverse effects on open space and recreation lands. See Impact 3.1-1 for a further discussion of these RTP elements.

Additional agricultural lands would be affected by the growth associated with the 2004 RTP. The effect of growth and urban development on agricultural lands is addressed in the Cumulative Impacts section of this chapter.

The loss and disturbance of open space and recreation lands would be a significant impact of the 2004 RTP.

Mitigation Measures

MM 3.1-2a: Project implementation agencies shall ensure that projects are consistent with Federal, State, and local plans that preserve open space.

MM 3.1-2b: Project implementation agencies shall consider corridor realignment, buffer zones and setbacks, and berms and fencing where feasible, to avoid open space and recreation land and to reduce conflicts between transportation uses and open space and recreation lands.

MM 3.1-2c: Project implementation agencies shall identify open space areas that could be preserved and shall include mitigation measures (such as dedication or payment of in-lieu fees) for the loss of open space.

MM 3.1-2d: Prior to final approval of each project, the implementing agency shall conduct the appropriate project-specific environmental review, including consideration of loss of open space. Potential significant impacts to open space shall be mitigated, as feasible. The project implementation agencies or local jurisdiction shall be responsible for ensuring adherence to the mitigation measures prior to construction.

MM 3.1-2e: For projects that require approval or funding by the USDOT, project implementation agencies shall comply with Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act.

MM 3.1-2f: Future impacts to open space and recreation lands shall be avoided through cooperation, information sharing, and program development during the update of the Open Space and Conservation chapter of SCAG's RCPG and through SCAG's Energy and Environment Committee.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of the 2004 RTP would result in a potentially substantial loss and/or disturbance of open space and recreation lands. This impact would remain **significant**.

Impact 3.1-3: The proposed 2004 RTP contains transportation projects and strategies to distribute the future growth in the region. These projects and strategies potentially would result in inconsistencies with currently applicable adopted local land use plans and policies.

The 2004 RTP contains transportation projects and strategies to help more efficiently distribute population, housing, and employment growth. These transportation projects and strategies are generally consistent with the county and regional level general plan data available to SCAG. However, general plans are updated on an inconsistent basis and not all cities have general plans. Some of the general plans that SCAG relied upon when creating the 2004 RTP are not current and may not reflect current planning policy or practice. In addition, the RTP's 2030 horizon year is beyond the timeline of even the most recent general plans. It is likely that over the

period of the 2004 RTP, transportation projects and resulting growth will be inconsistent with currently adopted general plans. With these limitations, there will be inconsistencies with general plans and potentially a significant effect. However, it is the goal of regional planning tools such as the RTP to set goals for efficient regional development. These goals would likely be reflected in general plans when they are revised and updated.

Mitigation Measures

MM 3.1-3a: SCAG shall encourage through regional policy comments that cities and counties in the region provide SCAG with electronic versions of their most recent general plan and any updates as they are produced.

MM 3.1-3b: SCAG shall encourage through regional policy comments that cities and counties update their general plans at least every ten years, as recommended by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

MM 3.1-3c: SCAG shall work with its member cities and counties to ensure that transportation projects and growth are consistent with the RTP and general plans.

MM 3.1-3d: Planning is an iterative process and SCAG is a consensus building organization. SCAG shall work with cities and counties to ensure that general plans reflect RTP policies. SCAG will work to build consensus on how to address inconsistencies between general plans and RTP policies.

Significance after Mitigation

In some instances, currently adopted general plans will need to be updated, especially general plans that are known to be out of date. Thus, the impact would remain potentially **significant**.

Cumulative Impacts

A cumulative impact consists of an impact that is created as a result of the combination of the 2004 RTP together with other projects causing related impacts. In addition to the impacts described above, the urban development and growth that would be accommodated by the transportation investments in the 2004 RTP would have the following additional cumulative impacts:

Cumulative Impact 3.1-4: Urbanization in the SCAG region will increase substantially by 2030. The 2004 RTP, by increasing mobility and including land-use-transportation measures, influences the pattern of this urbanization. The 2004 RTP's influence on growth contributes to regional cumulatively considerable impacts to land use and would change the intensity of land use in some areas.

The construction and operation of the transportation projects in the 2004 RTP would affect a number of land uses. Table 3.1-2 shows the estimated acreage of different land use categories that occur within 150 feet of either side of the reasonably foreseeable transportation alignments included in either the Plan or the No Project Alternative. The land uses affected by the No Project Alternative will be discussed in the Comparison with the No Project section of this chapter.

Table 3.1-2: Land Uses Affected by Major Highway, Transit, and Freight Rail Projects in the 2004 RTP

Land Use	Plan Alternative Approximate Acres Affected	No Project Alternative Approximate Acres Affected
Commercial	8,000	2,600
Extraction	400	40
Grazing Land	7,700	1,800
Industrial	6,000	1,000
Low Density Residential	11,900	3,600
Medium to High Density Residential	5,900	2,200
Open Space & Recreation	1,400	300
Prime Farmland	6,500	1,300
Public Facilities & Institutions	2,300	800
Rural Density Residential	900	300
Transportation & Utilities	8,800	2,400
Vacant	21,300	4,500
Water & Floodways	80	10

Source: SCAG GIS Analysis, 2003.

In addition to these direct impacts on land use, the urban footprint of new development supported by the 2004 RTP is expected to consume 500,000 – 700,000 acres of vacant, undeveloped land by 2030.

The 2004 RTP includes policies that would influence the distribution of the growing population. The land use measures included in the 2004 RTP would encourage use of underutilized land, and in some cases would help increase the intensity of the use to achieve mobility and other benefits. Underutilized land is land that is built at a density less than permitted by general plans. However, stable single family neighborhoods would be protected, regardless of whether or not they were built at the maximum allowable density, as indicated by general plans.

The innovative strategies and policies put forth in the 2004 RTP would affect current land use but would generally stay within the parameters of existing general plans. Implementation of these strategies under the 2004 RTP could result in changes in land uses by changing concentrations of development throughout the six-county region. The RTP will provide a blueprint to revitalize areas through its land use strategies.

The contribution of the 2004 RTP to impacts on existing land use would be cumulatively considerable, as it would result in changes to existing land use, including prime farmlands, grazing lands, and open space and recreational lands.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures 3.1-1a through 3.1-1f, 3.1-2a through 3.1-2e, and 3.1-3a through 3.1-3d would be applied to mitigate this cumulative impact in addition to the following measure.

MM 3.1-4a: SCAG's Growth Visioning program and the forthcoming Regional Growth Vision will be used to build a consensus in the region to support changes in land use to accommodate future population growth while maintaining the quality of life in the region.

Significance after Mitigation

In order to accommodate six million more people as projected by 2030, the region will need to change land uses and increase the intensity of some existing land use. The cumulative impact would remain **significant**.

Comparison with the No Project Alternative

In the No Project alternative the population of the SCAG region grows by 6 million people, however no regional transportation investments are made above the existing programmed projects.

Direct Impacts

The No Project Alternative includes fewer transportation projects than the 2004 RTP. Thus, the No Project Alternative would be expected to directly consume or disturb fewer acres of agricultural lands and open space than the Plan Alternative. The No Project Alternative potentially would affect 1,300 acres of prime agricultural land and 1,800 acres of grazing land, compared with 6,500 acres of prime agricultural land and 7,700 acres of grazing land under the Plan Alternative. The transportation projects included in the No Project Alternative would be located within 150 feet of 300 acres of designated open space, compared with 1,100 acres of open space in the Plan Alternative. In addition, because the No Project Alternative includes only transportation projects that already have environmental clearance and includes no growth strategies, there would be less potential for conflict with general plans than under the Plan Alternative.

The Plan would have a greater impact than the No Project Alternative for Impacts 3.1-1 through 3.1-3.

Indirect Impacts

The No Project Alternative is expected to accommodate the same increase in total population as the proposed Plan Alternative. However, the Plan Alternative includes land use measures that would help reduce the consumption and disturbance of agricultural lands, vacant lands, open space, and recreation lands. These mitigating measures are absent in the No Project Alternative. The proposed Plan Alternative also includes additional transportation improvements that facilitate access to agricultural lands, vacant lands, open space, and recreation lands that would be less accessible with the No Project Alternative. This improved accessibility under the Plan Alternative would help facilitate population and economic growth in areas of the region that are currently not developed. Furthermore, the proposed Plan Alternative includes additional households and jobs associated with the economic benefits of implementing the Plan that would consume vacant land. Due to these competing factors, it is expected that the No Project Alternative and the Plan Alternative would consume similar acreage of vacant land.

The Plan Alternative's cumulative impacts to land use would be approximately the same as those of the No Project Alternative.

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